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## From My Dance Is Mathematics: Poems From a Mathematics Teacher

JoAnne S. Growney  
*Bloomsburg University*

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# from *My Dance Is Mathematics:* *Poems From a Mathematics Teacher*

JoAnne Growney  
Bloomsburg University

## GEOMETRY CLASS

Yesterday, some visitors  
interrupted geometry class --  
angry voices raged around the room,  
unwilling to stay caged within my head,  
while I spoke pleasantly  
of axioms of incidence,  
placements of parallels,  
numbers of degrees  
in the angles of rectangles.

*Wake up. This is not difficult --  
no hungry mouths to feed, no  
bleeding wounds to heal. Adopt  
a polygonal attitude. Examine  
an assumption. Abandon the postulate  
that says, don't ever question.  
You were not born knowing.  
Your mind won't get dirty  
on a tangent of hyperbolic thought.*

*Open up.  
Let one eye watch  
the parallels  
that meet.  
Shift to a point  
of perspectivity.  
Draw those lines  
that cross  
at your heart.*

My students  
ignored these voices,  
so I dismissed them  
and went on --  
politely coaxing  
obtuse angles  
to square up  
and respond.

## FINDING TIME

Points chase points  
around the circle,  
anti-clockwise,  
fighting time.  
You know time's a circle,  
rather than a line.

Make a line a circle!  
Pick a center.  
Wrap and wrap and wrap  
the line around the rim.  
How do the ends  
get tucked in?

Cut a circle open,  
stretch into a line.  
Does the cut destroy  
a point or fit  
between a pair?  
If the cut's midway

from now to Tuesday,  
how do I get there?  
Do I move on  
by going back,  
or may I  
skip a space?

A square is neither line  
nor circle; it's timeless.  
Points don't chase around  
a square. Firm, steady,  
it sits there and knows  
its place. A circle  
won't be squared.